United Nations

Press Release

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Pledging Conference for 1992 Development Activities ends with United Nations Agencies appealing for increased support.

- New peace prospects could make 1992 "year of voluntary repatriation", High Commissioner tells Social Committee, as it begins discussion of plight of refugees and displaced persons.

- Needy Iraqis assured emergency food rations until end of year, World Food Programme says.

- Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator reports 2155 dead in floods which struck Phulippines on 5 November.

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A two-day Pledging Conference for Development Activities for 1992 ended yesterday at Headquarters with appeals from United Nations Agencies for increased support for their programmes and activities.

More than 60 States made pledges at the annual Conference, which is the principal forum for States to announce their contributions to the various bodies of the United Nations system for its development activities.

Addressing the Conference, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), William H. Draper III, said that pledges suggested that 1992 contributions to the Programme would only total $1.06 billion -- almost $250 million less than the target of $1.3 billion. That would make it difficult for the UNDP to meet planned country allocations, he said.

(more)

* Revised to include a line of the fourth headline, which was deleted in error.

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In his statement, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), James P. Grant, said the total income of the UNICEF for 1992 was estimated at $850 million. However, he said, the announced pledges and estimated government contributions totalled only half of that amount. If goals for children in the 1990s were to be met, each donor would have to increase aid allocations for human development, he stated.

The Executive Director of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Dr. Nafis Sadik, said countries had pledged only half of the total estimated income of UNFPA for 1992, which was $221 million. The Fund had received requests for population assistance totalling over $550 million and would need an 18 per cent increase in contributions to meet the decade's population goals.

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New prospects for peace in Central America, Asia and Africa could make 1992 "the year of voluntary repatriation", the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) this morning, as it began its debate on refugee questions.

Mrs. Sadako Ogata also stressed the need to reconcile the principle of national sovereignty with humanitarian access to the internally displaced. The UNHCR's non-political and humanitarian role must be accepted by local Governments, she said, emphasizing her organization's mission to contribute to peace through its determined pursuit of lasting humanitarian solutions.

In another introductory statement, James O.C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, called attention to the plight of some 4.5 million returnees, displaced persons and refugees in Southern Africa. He stressed that urgent relief should be provided with a view to recovery and development in that region.

In a separate development, the UNHCR is commemorating its 40th anniversary with an exhibit at Headquarters called "four decades of international protection and care for refugees". The Exhibit, which will be on display through November, highlights with maps, photos and 3-dimensional sculptures, the emergencies of the past 40 years, and the on-going search for solutions for today's 17 million refugees.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) announced today that it would extend its current relief operations inside Iraq to feed more than 1.5 million poor people affected by the 1990 Gulf war, for another 2 months.

Since March, the Agency has held sole responsibility for the United Nations emergency food operations inside Iraq. The operations were originally intended to last only until September. However, the food supply situation facing vulnerable groups in Iraq continues to be precarious, the WFP states.

To help meet these needs, the Agency has approved the supply of another 35,156 tonnes of emergency food for Kurds in the northern part of Iraq, for the displaced people in the south and 150,000 people still moving from place to place. The cost of the new operation is just over $15.3 million.

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The Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) in Geneva reported today that floods caused by a tropical storm which hit the central Philippines on 5 November had killed 2155 and injured 37.

The Agency reported that electricity and communications were not operational in the affected areas. So far, the UNDRO said, the Government of that country had not requested international assistance.

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